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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/631,921	07/31/2003	Jigish D. Trivedi	MICRON.104DV1	9664
20995	7590	03/10/2005	EXAMINER	
KNOBBE MARTENS OLSON & BEAR LLP			POMPEY, RON EVERETT	
2040 MAIN STREET			ART UNIT	
FOURTEENTH FLOOR			PAPER NUMBER	
IRVINE, CA 92614			2812	

DATE MAILED: 03/10/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/631,921

Applicant(s)

TRIVEDI, JIGISH D.

Examiner

Ron E. Pompey

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 24 February 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-12, 14-18 and 20-26 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-12, 14-18 and 20-26 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okumura (US 4,935,380) in further view of the admitted prior art (APA) and Yoo (US 5,605,854).

Okumura discloses the limitations of:

forming a gate stack on a substrate, the gate stack having at least one conductive layer, of tungsten silicide, (205, fig. 7B) and a source layer of polysilicon (213, fig. 7B) positioned on top of the at least one conductive layer, the source layer providing a source of transforming atoms (col. 6, ln. 59 – col. 7, ln. 9).

3. Okumura fails to disclose the limitations of:

exhuming a first layer of the gate stack so as to expose a portion of the source layer above at least a portion of the gate stack, comprises removing a portion of a cap insulating layer;

depositing a refractory material, of titanium, on the integrated circuit so that the refractory material contacts the exposed portion of the source layer of the gate stack and so that the refractory material is positioned on another device of the integrated circuit;

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forming a masking layer over the refractory material;

etching the masking layer so as to define an extent of the local interconnect;

selectively transforming the refractory material underneath the etched masking layer including at the exposed portion of the source layer into a low resistance contact wherein the source layer provides transforming atoms to the portion of the refractory material positioned adjacent the exposed portion of the source layer;

performing a selective removal process, which comprises etching the exposed refractory material after annealing the refractory material with etchant (wet) which is selective for nitrides and substantially less reactive with silicides, wherein portions of the refractory material beyond the masking layer are preferentially removed and wherein the transformed refractory material underneath the masking layer is preferentially unresponsive to the selective removal process;

wherein annealing the refractory material comprises exposing the refractory material to a rapid thermal processing environment having an N₂/NH₃ ambient so as to increase the temperature of the refractory material to a value between 600 degrees Celsius and 750 degrees Celsius for a period of time between 10 seconds and 60 seconds;

wherein the source layer provides the transforming atoms to the refractory material during transformation of the refractory material such that the selective removal process reduces undercutting of the low resistance contact at the exposed surface of the source layer;

wherein the transforming of the refractory material comprises transforming the refractory material adjacent the source layer into a silicide contact and wherein the transforming atoms of the source layer comprise silicon atoms to transform the refractory material adjacent the source layer into the low resistance contact.

a. However, the admitted prior art discloses:

exhuming (202, fig. 1) a first layer (216, fig. 1) of the gate stack so as to expose a portion of the source layer;

depositing a refractory material, of titanium, (218, fig. 1) on the integrated circuit so that the refractory material contacts the exposed portion of the source layer of the gate stack and so that the refractory material is positioned on another device of the integrated circuit; and

forming a masking layer (220, fig. 1) over the refractory material;

etching the masking layer so as to define an extent of the local interconnect;

selectively transforming the refractory material underneath the etched masking layer including at the exposed portion of the source layer into a low resistance contact wherein the source layer provides transforming atoms to the portion of the refractory material positioned adjacent the exposed portion of the source layer;

performing a selective removal process, which comprises etching the exposed refractory material after annealing the refractory material with etchant (wet) which is selective for nitrides and substantially less reactive with silicides, wherein portions of the refractory material beyond the masking layer are preferentially removed and wherein

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the transformed refractory material underneath the masking layer is preferentially unresponsive to the selective removal process;

wherein the source layer provides the transforming atoms to the refractory material during transformation of the refractory material such that the selective removal process reduces undercutting of the low resistance contact at the exposed surface of the source layer;

wherein the transforming of the refractory material comprises transforming the refractory material adjacent the source layer into a silicide contact and wherein the transforming atoms of the source layer comprise silicon atoms to transform the refractory material adjacent the source layer into the low resistance contact. (pg. 1, ln. 28 – pg. 3, ln. 3).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the admitted prior art with Okumura, because the first layer protects the gate structure from subsequent process and the refractory material provides an electrical connection between circuit nodes in an integrated circuit.

b. However, Yoo discloses:


wherein annealing the refractory material comprises exposing the refractory material to a rapid thermal processing environment having an N₂/NH₃ ambient so as to increase the temperature of the refractory material to a value between 600 degrees Celsius and 750 degrees Celsius for a period of time between 10 seconds and 60 seconds (col. 4, lns. 43-67).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine Yoo with Okumura and the admitted prior art, because rapid thermal processing has less effect on the doping concentrations set in the previous process due to less prolonged heat treatment.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ron E. Pompey whose telephone number is (571) 272-1680. The examiner can normally be reached on compressed.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Michael S. Lebentritt can be reached on (571) 272-1873. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Ron Pompey
AU: 2812
March 04, 2005


MICHAEL LEBENTRITT
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER